

SPECIAL MEETING NORTH SMITHFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

JANUARY 6, 2014

KENDALL-DEAN SCHOOL AUDITORIUM

7:00 P.M.

The meeting began at 7:15 P.M. with the prayer and the pledge to the flag. Council members present were Ms. Alves, Mr. McGee, Mr. Yazbak, Mr. Zwolenski and Mr. Flaherty. Also in attendance were Town Administrator Hamilton and Town Solicitor Lombardi. School Committee members present included Mrs. Bonas, Mr. Connell and Mrs. Narodowy and Superintendent of Schools Stephen Lindberg. Planning Board members present included Mr. Bassett, Ms. Jones, Mr. Naylor and Ms. Roberts. Budget Committee members present included Mr. Clifford, Mrs. Nadeau, Mrs. Vallee and Mr. Winkleman.

SCHOOL DISTRICT RECONFIGURATION

Mr. Flaherty explained that a Public Facilities Advisory Task Force was created to look at town buildings throughout town in order to fix them, better use them and as a long-term approach to address a variety of capital improvements. The goal of the Council is to determine whether a proposal should be put before voters in November.

Mr. Lindberg reviewed options that have been discussed by the School Committee regarding moving classrooms, handling of additional lunch periods, space for a computer lab, modular classrooms, etc.

Mr. Flaherty questioned the possibility of having a pre-kindergarten and kindergarten wing at the high school.

Mr. Lindberg believed it would not be a feasible option for various reasons including construction that would be necessary and the cost involved.

Budget Committee Chairman Michael Clifford felt that some of the school buildings are under-utilized and not being used efficiently. He also spoke about projected declining enrollment.

CAPITAL BUDGET PLANNING

Ms. Hamilton reviewed the capital budget process as written in the town Charter and in the Rhode Island General Laws. She is seeking more background and reasons why requests are made in order to fine tune the process.

Planning Board members Dean Naylor and Arthur Bassett agreed that the capital budget process has been eroding the past four or five years. There has been no standard format or documentation presented to the Planning Board.

Mr. Clifford commented there should be a complete asset inventory in place with projected life spans. He also suggested that capital budgets be presented in November to the Budget Committee.

PRE-BUDGET CONSULTATION, FY 2015 PROPOSED SCHOOL DEPARTMENT BUDGET AND \$240,000 SPORTS CONTINGENCY FUNDS TRANSFER

Mr. Flaherty read the state statute regarding a pre-budget consultation.

Finance Director Brenda MacDonald and School Business Manager Lisa Marcotte have collaborated and submitted the town's five-year projected forecast to the state.

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Mr. Clifford requested copies of the fiscal impact statement on school administrative contracts for the Budget Committee. He also asked for hard copies as well as electronic files of the proposed budget.

There was discussion in regards to the school department releasing an excel spreadsheet versus a pdf file.

Mr. Yazbak concurred with Mr. Lindberg that he would be hesitant to provide the master excel spread sheet. Mr. Lombardi believed it to be a public document for an internal board and the Budget Committee should have access to it. As an APRA request, it would be a different matter.

Ms. Hamilton has received the school department's proposed budget for fiscal year 2015 and feels that it does not conform to state law. Although the revenue request conforms to the state cap, the expenditures are over by \$2 million plus. She cannot accept the budget as it is not balanced. Ms. Hamilton requested they provide a balanced budget proposal within thirty days.

Ms. Hamilton was asked to put her request in writing.

Regarding the \$240,000 sports contingency, Mrs. Bonas stated the School Committee is just waiting for a response from the Town Council.

It states in Ms. Hamilton's powerpoint presentation given at the Council meeting of June 17th: "FY2014 includes the addition of line items for Contingency Infrastructure and Contingency Sports. These budget line items were added this year to cover infrastructure improvements throughout the Town, as well as an amount to fund school sports should the School Department be unable to fund the program with their existing allocation. These total approximately \$400,000 that was not included in last year's budget." As Ms. Hamilton understood it, if the school department could not run a full sports program, the sports contingency line item would be used for that. She asked if the budget she received was balanced, if it included sports and if it was the final approved budget and was told that it was.

Mr. Flaherty agreed that the Council minutes of June 17th are consistent with Ms. Hamilton's comments. The money was there if needed but a balanced budget was presented and it included sports. Based on that Mr. Flaherty was unclear under what circumstances the money would be transferred.

Mr. Lindberg then questioned why he would receive a letter from the Town Administrator in July stating that once the school department had reconciled their budget to the appropriation, she would transfer the money.

Mr. Clifford commented that the Budget Committee's recommendation had been that if the school department was unable to provide sports within the \$23.6 million budget, then the money would be there as a contingency fund.

Mr. Yazbak did not vote to approve the budget; one reason being that he did not feel the school department received the funding that it needed to fulfill mandates. It seemed that the school department would have to show a deficit of at least \$240,000 and go through the process of state law showing they were operating under a deficit. It would then be up to the Council to complete the funding.

MOTION by Mr. Zwolenski, seconded by Mr. Yazbak, and voted unanimously on an aye vote to take a five-minute recess at 9:06 P.M.

The meeting reconvened at 9:14 P.M.

CHARTER AMENDMENTS

Town board and commission members had been invited to attend this meeting to provide any recommendations they may have.

Mr. Flaherty reviewed the proposed amendments made by the Council members, the Town Administrator and the municipal staff.

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There was discussion about Town Council approval of all contracts prior to ratification, appointed School Committee members and a Town Manager versus a Town Administrator.

Mr. Michael Rapko thought it might be better to look more at serious issues rather than housekeeping changes.

MOTION by Mr. Zwolenski, seconded by Ms. Alves, and voted unanimously on a roll call vote at 9:50 P.M. to extend the meeting to 10:30 P.M.

PUBLIC FACILITIES ADVISORY TASK FORCE

Mr. Flaherty has been copying the Council on the progress of the task force. The next meeting is tomorrow and they will be with the consultants. Mr. Flaherty hopes to bring something to the Town

Council meeting on February 3, 2014.

WIRELESS FACILITY ON COMSTOCK ROAD WATER TOWER

Mr. Lombardi is not comfortable with the entire document. There are still a number of questions to which he has not received a response.

STONE ARCH BRIDGE RECONSTRUCTION

Ms. Hamilton received the 90 percent plans today from the state and they are looking for the town to review the plans. The anticipated start date is now the spring of 2015, one year later than expected.

Mr. Flaherty wants to call on the town's representatives to move this back to 2014 as it is a priority.

Town Planner Robert Ericson noted that the bridge is now in a much more dangerous condition than the town had been told previously and it's not the weight capacity but the sub-base.

Ms. Hamilton agreed to follow up with a letter to the state.

PROCESS FOR DISPOSITION OF TOWN PROPERTY

Ms. Alves will work with the Tax Assessor on a new ordinance to allow residents to purchase town-owned land abutting their property.

APPOINTMENT OF TREE WARDEN

MOTION by Mr. Zwolenski, seconded by Mr. Yazbak, and voted

unanimously on a roll call vote to reappoint Stanley Zuba.

PURCHASE OF CONVERSION OF LAND EVIDENCE RECORDS

MOTION by Mr. Zwolenski, seconded by Ms. Alves, and voted unanimously on a roll call vote to approve the purchase of conversion of microfilm to digital image of the town's land evidence records by ACS for the amount of \$10,000.06. Funding will come from the historical records preservation account.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION by Ms. Alves, seconded by Mr. McGee, and voted unanimously on a roll call vote to enter into executive session at 10:10 P.M. pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5(A)(2) Sessions pertaining to collective bargaining or litigation, or work sessions pertaining to collective bargaining or litigation to discuss Kaczorowski vs. the Town of North Smithfield.

MOTION by Mr. Yazbak, seconded by Ms. Alves, and voted unanimously on a roll call vote to come out of executive session at 10:30 P.M. and to seal the minutes. No motions were made and no votes were taken.

MOTION by Ms. Alves, seconded by Mr. Yazbak, and voted unanimously on an aye vote to adjourn at 10:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra A. Todd, Town Clerk